

A Case Study on Motivation and Preferred Activities of EFL Learners in University

¹Elysa Hartati, ²Novia Ersalina Dewi, ³Nur Fachmi Budi Setyawan

^{1,2,3} Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

This research aims to investigate the type of learners' motivation which is predominant toward learning English as a foreign language. It is also conducted to find out the preferred activities used among English learners in a university setting. The research design was a single case study with the total sample of learners was 40 that were selected purposively from sophomore, junior and senior. The findings had shown that most of the learners were intrinsically motivated in learning English. As for learning styles, they preferred to be individually but for speaking practice, they preferred to be in small groups. It also provided evidence that the EFL learners of university preferred audio-visual activities, communicative activities, and game activities. To sum up, the English learners have good intrinsic motivation to learn in university context, therefore, the educators especially lecturers should build the learners motivation both intrinsic and extrinsic by providing sort of discussion and individual consultation as they prefer to do in the learning activities. Thus, the lecturers and learners can get input to improve their method or strategies in teaching and learning English. At last, the success of learning English can be achieved.

Keywords

motivation
preferred activities
EFL learners

Ethical Lingua

Vol. X, No. X, 20XX

ISSN 2355-3448 (Print)

ISSN 2540-9190 (Online)

Corresponding Email

Elysa Hartati

elysa@mercubuana-yogya.ac.id

Article's History

Submitted 14 March 2021

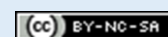
Revised 04 April 2021

Accepted 04 April 2021

Copyright © 2021

The Author(s)

This article is licensed under
CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 License



A Case Study on Motivation and Preferred Activities of EFL Learners in University

Introduction

In Indonesia, English is used for various purposes but it is not dominant in everyday communication. The government establishes in Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture (2013) that English is one of the subjects at various education levels given in order to prepare the Indonesian generation able to compete globally. In line with the context of foreign language in Indonesia, it needs a motivation for learners to learn it. Motivation is one of the most interesting variables in language learning (MacIntyre et al. 2001, p. 462). These words accurately describe the complexity of the concept that researchers, classroom instructors and language learners themselves should bring the various aspects of motivation within the process of teaching and learning.

Motivation has for some time been viewed as one of the essential factors in deciding one's accomplishment in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning that becomes a complex part of human psychology and behaviour. It impacts how people decide to contribute theirs, how much energy they use in task given, how they feel and consider the errand, and how they invest their chance to survive at it. Wiegfield & Eccles (2001) states that the learners in their learning atmosphere have to answer three basic questions; they are whether or not I can do this activity, whether or not I want to do this activity and why, and what need to do to succeed? It is likewise a compelling element in showing learning measure. The achievement of learning relies upon high or low the students' motivation is. It can drive learners in reaching the learning objective.

However, a research found that Indonesian learners' motivation measurement toward English is lacking (Bradford, 2008). In fact, it is an international language that is used in international activities as a means of communication and also taught in all education level. Thus, the motivation coming from intrinsic and extrinsic factors are necessary to deal with.

Motivation makes learners with a purpose to follow. Indeed, it brings a crucial role to determine the success of a language learning. When learners lack of motivation, they may face some difficulties to gain an effective learning. As Huitt (2001) stated that even learners do not have enough intrinsic motivation, paying attention to the importance of language will help learners improve their motivation to learn. It can be stated that educators should be aware of significance of motivation in learners' language learning and through some changes they can help learners increase their motivation.

Every state requires the educators be licensed by completing education requirements. A bachelor's degree from university is the minimum requirement. One of the universities that create educators is a university that has an English Language Education Study Program at the downtown of Yogyakarta. From the result of observation and interview that have been conducted at the university, it is urgent to conduct this research. Most of learners want to be a teacher or lecturer in the future. Therefore, they will need knowledge about motivation to motivate their students when they become a teacher in the future.

Dornyei (2001) believes that the complexity of the concept of motivation stems from its attempts to elaborate people's actions on behavior that cannot be explained by a single approach. According to Redzuan (2014), another aspect of motivation that could influence success in language learning is the learners' preferred activities. It was deciding factor that should be taken into consideration. For EFL learners, many activities are used in this program. To keep learners motivated, it was crucial for the educators to choose the classroom activities based on the learners' need.

Realizing the importance of motivation in fostering foreign language learning, it is found interesting to do a research about the motivation, in this case motivation in language learning. This research focused on the motivation that impacts EFL learners. The purpose of this research was to explore the role of motivation and describe different types of motivation toward learning English as foreign language learned at a university. It was also to find out the preferred learning activities that are appropriate to help them learn English effectively.

Method

A single case study was conducted to do this research. It was conducted at one of private University in Yogyakarta which has an English Language Education Study Program and located at the downtown of Yogyakarta. The data were collected through a close-ended questionnaire adopted from Gardner's Attitude and Motivation cited in Jefiza (2011). To make it more valid, there were also some items added to get deeper data which had been validated by the expert judgment. The added items come from consideration of necessities, lacks, and wants in Hutchinson & Waters (1987, 54).

The questionnaire was designed by using a Likert scale in which, the learners were asked to answer the statement items by choosing four categories; they were Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1. There were two categories; they were types of EFL learners' motivation at university and their preferred activities. In questionnaire, there were 40 items of statements that were written in English language. The items number 1-10 were employed to collect the information about intrinsic motivation and the other items number 11-20 were addressed to gain the data of extrinsic motivation. Then, there were also provided 20 statements about preferred activities employed. Each learners filled out the questionnaire based on their opinion and feeling. Thus, it was used to collect the data from the learners and identify how their motivation in learning English as foreign language at university. To specify the level of the agreement or disagreement, the criteria could be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Degree of motivation	
Mean Range	Interpretation
3.00 – 4.00	High degree of Motivation
2.00 – 2.99	Moderate degree of Motivation
1.00 – 1.99	Low degree of Motivation

In addition, the semi-structured interview was also used in this research. It provided the similar questions which could be modified during the interview process. At last, the data triangulation and investigator triangulation were also conducted in this research. The data were interpreted then crosschecked by the expert judgment toward the findings that have been found.

Results

The findings of the research were divided into two parts: the general information of the learners and also learners' motivation with their preferred language activities of EFL in university as well.

General Information of Learners

This part indicated the general demographic data of the participants. The results were shown based on the questionnaires distributed. It was shown that the total of participants was 40. The majority of participants were female (67.5%) and the minority of the participants were male (32.5%) that varied from some levels of academic year. There were 12.5% learners of senior, 22.5% learners of junior and 65% learners of sophomore participating in this research.

Learners' Motivation and Preferred Activities

In carrying out the research, the participants were required to give response to 40 items which determined the type of motivation and preferred activity they belonged to in a learning foreign language. There were 10 items of intrinsic category, 10 items for extrinsic category, 4 items of preferred learning style category, 11 items of preferred activity and 5 items of preferred media have been included in the questionnaire and the participants identified based on the high score they rated to any of the category.

Table 2. Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation	Mean	Degree of Motivational Level
1. I learn English in order to improve my English skills.	3.5	High
2. Learning English will allow me to be easier with English speakers.	3.65	High
3. Learning English allows me to participate more freely in the activities of other culture of other countries.	3.13	High
4. I learn English because it is something that I always want to do.	3.28	High
5. I study English because I enjoy learning it.	3.08	High
6. I'm afraid in English exam I do something wrong or forget something.	2.93	Moderate
7. No matter how much I like or dislike a class, I still try to learn from it.	3.08	High
8. I feel the challenging assignments can be great learning experiences.	3.2	High
9. English helps me to gain valuable knowledge.	3.4	High
10. My quality of English is depends on my efforts in learning.	3.53	High
Total	3.28	High

Based on Table 2, the highest influence of intrinsic motivation was statement number 2 (Learning English will allow me to be easier with English speakers) with the mean score of 3.65. The participants also have rated high score on statement number 10 (My quality of English is dependent on my efforts in learning) with the mean score of 3.53. The statement number 1 (I learn English in order to improve my English skills) has a mean score of 3.5. The lowest mean score for intrinsic motivation was statement number 6 (I'm afraid in English exam I do something wrong or forget something) the mean score of 2.93. The overall mean score of intrinsic motivation was 3.28. It demonstrated a high level of motivation.

Table 3. Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic Motivation	Mean	Degree of Motivational Level
1. Learning English is useful in getting a good job.	3.18	High
2. I learn English because I need it to further my studies overseas.	3.08	High
3. I study English because I want to do well in my examination.	3	High
4. I study English in order to please my family.	2.48	Moderate
5. I feel that no one is really educated unless he is fluent in English.	1.78	Low
6. Learning English gives me the possibility to communicate with people from other countries.	3.53	High
7. I need it to get the certificate of Bachelor degree.	2.9	Moderate
8. I study English to impress others or to avoid feelings of guilt or failure.	2.15	Moderate
9. I need to study my English to travel in the future with more confidence.	3.2	High
10. I can't get higher position of my job unless I learn English.	2.25	Moderate
Total	2.75	Moderate

Based on Table 3, it has been found out that item 6, 9 and 1 were the most influential external motivation that drove learners to learn EFL. The statement number 6 (Learning English gives me the possibility to communicate with people from other countries), followed by statement number 9 (I need to study my English to travel in the future with more confidence) and the participants also have rated high score on statement number 1 (Learning English is useful in getting a good job) showed the highest level of extrinsic motivation with the mean scores of 3.53, 3.2 and 3.18 respectively. However, the statement of number 5 (I feel that no one is

really educated unless he is fluent in English) have the lowest mean score which is 1.78. The overall mean score of extrinsic motivation was 2.75. The level of motivation was moderate.

Table 4. Predominant Between Intrinsic and External Motivation

Motivation	Mean	Degree of Motivational Level
Intrinsic Motivation	3.28	High
Extrinsic Motivation	2.75	Moderate

Table 4 presented the predominant between intrinsic and external motivation. It revealed that the mean score of intrinsic motivation (3.28) was higher than the mean score of extrinsic motivation (2.75).

Table 5. Learners' Preferred Learning Style

Preferred Style in Learning English	Mean	Degree of Motivational Level
1. I like to learn English individually.	3.08	High
2. I like to learn English in pairs.	2.95	Moderate
3. I like to learn English in small group.	3.13	High
4. I like to learn English in large group.	2.78	Moderate

As displayed in Table 5, the participants are most likely enjoy learning in small groups (M=3.18). They disagree the activities which require them to work individually (M=3.08).

Table 6. Learners' Preferred Activities

Preferred Activities in Learning English	Mean	Degree of Motivational Level
5. To learn English, I like to practice speaking with my friends in class.	3.2	High
6. I listen and copy notes from the board or PPT.	2.8	Moderate
7. I play games in English.	3.15	High
8. I read a lot of English materials	2.95	Moderate
9. I do role plays and dramas	2.93	Moderate
10. I make summaries of what I have learned in class	3	High
11. I write a story or paper for assignment	2.73	Moderate
12. I comment or assess my friends' perform	2.5	Moderate
13. I do task by internet or e-learning	2.7	Moderate
14. I analyze the case of text or picture	3	High
15. I listen to music or watch video in English	3.58	High

Based on Table 6, the participants have chosen listen to music or watch video in English as their preferred language activity in learning a foreign language as the mean of this activity has shown the highest mean of 3.58 among others. The second was 3.2 which belonged to learning through speaking practice with their friends in the class. The third was 3.15 which belonged to play games in English. Comment or assess my friends' perform as the least activity which learners like in the EFL classroom. It showed by the mean score of 2.5.

Table 7. Learners' Preferred Learning Media

Preferred Media in Learning English	Mean	Degree of Motivational Level
16. I like to learn English by music	3.5	High
17. I like to learn English by movie	3.58	High
18. I like to learn English by book.	2.9	Moderate
19. I like to learn English by internet or games.	3.03	High
20. I like to learn English by media application.	3.1	High

In order to discover the learners' preferred learning media, this research has been designed relevant statements to determine whether the participants are fond of learning by music, movie, book, internet or games and media application. As displayed in Table 7, the participants are most likely enjoy learning by movie (M=3.58). They did not really like the learning media by book (M=2.9).

Regarding to the interview with some participants, the information was gotten that all of participants like to learn English. They motivated to study English because they want to improve their English skill. They agreed that learning English is very important for them. They learned English because it was their favorite subject since they were in senior high school. By mastering English they can communicate with some people in other countries. However, beside of the learners like to learn English and want to speak English well, there were also learners who felt hesitate when answering whether they enjoyed learning English because sometimes felt bored.

Related to getting a job, it has been found from the result of interview various answers such travel guide, English teacher or lecturer, entrepreneur, and worker at some companies or institutions that motivate them to learn English. Whereas in interview session about activity, it has been found that some of the learners wanted to learn individually and felt uncomfortable when learning English in pairs or group. Others felt more at ease when learning with friends or peers; when they learned together, they could discuss the problem, solution, evaluation, and participate in many activities such as practice speaking in learning English. It has also been found a fact that some of participants love to learn debate as the preferred activity in English classroom rather than the other activities.

At the last session of interview, the question was related about the learners' favorite media. All of learner have similar statements. They like to learn English by music or movie. Not to mention, some of them also added to have games as their favorite learning media.

Discussion

Based on the presentation, the learners mostly agreed in the items from questionnaire. It provides the information that most of the learners have motivation in learning English by their intrinsic motivation. This was shown clearly by the mean score of 3.28 in the table 2. They also realized their quality of English depends on their effort. It showed they learn English because of their own desires. It also found out, less of learners feel afraid do something wrong or forget something in English exam. It means there are few intrinsic reasons the learners had in learning English. Therefore, the overall result of intrinsic motivation demonstrated as a high level of motivation. Moreover, based on the finding of extrinsic motivation, the participants claimed learning EFL was to connect with people from other countries, for travel with more confidence, and last for getting a good job, which is an extrinsic motivator for it refers to "doing something because it results in a separable outcome," (Ryan & Deci, 1985, p. 55). It showed they learn English because of external factor also. The overall mean score of extrinsic motivation was moderate. This was shown by the mean score of 2.75 in the table 4.

The practical implication of this finding was the educators need to improve the learning style by making small group in the class, for the teaching activities by adding audio-visual activities in the materials like listening to music or watching videos. The finding of interview reveals that it has discovered the fact that some of participants love to learn debate, speech and speaking practice as the preferred activity in English classroom rather than the other activities. Thus, they also can add the communicative activities, like speaking practice, debate and speech. To be more attractive, spoken audio recording can be an option in speaking material. Taking this into account, the content of the materials can be adjusted with the target language needs (Widyawan and Hartati, 2016). It also can be a combination from audio and communicative activities. The last, the educators can add games activity in the beginning, middle or closing part of the lesson to motivate the learners if the situation and conditions are needed in class.

Conclusion

The investigation showed EFL learners were highly motivated by intrinsic motivations. The learners were motivated either by their enjoyment of the learning process or by an internal desire. As a result, there must be a balance in classroom instruction to ensure that learners' motivation is enhanced from both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. In light of the research findings that students have strong intrinsic motivation to learn English at university, educators should work with students to develop both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation through discussion and individual consultation. Following that, educators can receive feedback on how to improve their method or strategies for teaching English.

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank to Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta especially English Language Education Study Program that has facilitated us in conducting this research particularly in gaining the data. This article has been presented in the International Conference on Science and Technology Innovation in Education held by Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta.

References

- Bradford, A. 2008. *Motivational Orientations in Under-researched FLL Contexts: Findings from Indonesia*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publication, 38(3), pp.302-323.
- Berges-Puyó, G. 2018. *Motivational Factors in Learning an L2: A Study on Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation, Classroom Materials and Teachers' Behaviors*.
- Dornyei, Z. 2001. *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Eccles, Jacquelynne & Wigfield, Allan. (2002). Motivational Beliefs, Values and Goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*. 53. 109-132. 10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135153.
- Huitt, W. 2001. *Motivation to Learn: an Overview*. (www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/motivation/motivate.html accessed on October 27th 2017)
- Jefiza. 2012. *Students' Motivation and Attitudes toward Learning English Course in Bandung*. Indonesia University of Education
- MacIntyre, P. D., MacMaster, K., & Baker, S. C. 2001. The convergence of multiple models of motivation for second language learning: Gardner, Pintrich, Kuhl, and McCroskey. In Z. Dornyei & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 461-492).
- Redzuan, Buda, and Abdullah. 2014. *English Language Learning: A Case study Motivation and Preferred Activities among Engineering Students in Polytechnic Kuching Sarawak*. *Journal of Techno Social*.
- Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture. 2013. *Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 32 Tahun 2013 tentang Perubahan atas Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 19 Tahun 2005 Tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan*. (<http://kelembagaan.ristekdikti.go.id/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/PP0322013.pdf>, accessed on 22nd April 2018).
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. 2000. *Self-determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-being*. *American Psychologist*.
- Widyawan, K. W. and Hartati E. 2016. *Improving Students' Speaking Skill by Using Their Spoken Audio Recording in Middle School*. *Journal of English and Education*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 31.
- Yin, R. K. 2014. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5th Ed.